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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COUNTY OFFERS ASSISTANCE WITH COOLING CENTERS

Public encouraged to frequently check on neighbors and loved ones during heat wave

MERCED – In anticipation of extreme heat conditions today and this weekend, Merced County will be supporting the cities of Atwater, Gustine, Los Banos and Merced, by providing transportation and supplies to the respective cooling centers. Each city will open their respective center at their discretion. The County's Office of Emergency Services Information Line will have information on the opening of centers. The phone number is (209)385-7379 or toll free at 1-800-423-5870.

"In cases of extreme heat, it's vitally important for people to remain as cool as possible," commented Emergency Medical Services Administrator, Chuck Baucom. "We also want to remind residents that in this heat wave, they should check on their elderly family and friends, who are especially susceptible to heat related illnesses. Drink plenty of fluids and remain indoors, if at all possible."

In addition to providing transportation to the centers, the County will also have water and snacks for residents while at the cooling centers.

Center locations include:

Name of Center	Address	Expected Hours of Operation	Disability Access	Transportation Options
Merced Senior Center	755 W. 15 th Street	4 pm – 8 pm (Friday)	Yes	Bus/Dial-a-Ride
Sam Pipes Room Merced Civic Center	678 W. 18 th Street	4 pm – 8 pm (Saturday)	Yes	Bus/Dial-a-Ride
Atwater Community Center	768 Bellevue Road	11 am – 9 pm	Yes	Bus/Dial-a-Ride
Miller/Lux Building - Los Banos	830 6 th Street	11 am – 10 pm	Yes	Bus/Dial-a-Ride
Al Gorman Center – Gustine	741 Linden Avenue	2 pm – 10 pm	Yes	Bus/Dial-a-Ride

For information on The Bus, you can contact Merced County Transit at (209) 725-3813 or toll-free at (800) 345-3111. From August through October, The Bus is offering free rides throughout the County. Residents can make use of these free bus rides to get to the various cooling centers. Dial-A-Ride buses will also pick up individuals who need transportation to the cooling centers, until 5:30 pm, Mondays-Saturdays, for

periods when the cooling shelters are open. For more information on Dial-A-Ride, including information to register disabled riders, please call (209) 384-3111. Under a Heat Advisory, Dial-A-Ride will be waiving its normal age/disability restrictions.

The National Weather Service defines a Heat Advisory, as a prolonged period of hot temperatures (110+ heat index for more than two hours). The combination of hot temperatures and high humidity will combine to create a dangerous situation in which heat related illnesses are possible. The National Weather Service encourages people to drink plenty of fluids and stay in an air-conditioned room, stay out of the sun, and check up on relatives and neighbors, especially the elderly. During periods of extreme heat, it is especially important not to leave individuals or pets in an unattended car.

– 30 –

For more information regarding Merced County, please visit our website at www.co.merced.ca.us